

# Julius Caesar



Julius Caesar, the most famous Roman of all, was the greatest general of the ancient times, perhaps of all time. Born with the name of Gaius Julius Caesar in Rome, he was a patrician male. His aunt Julia had been married to Gaius Marius, a military hero who was later killed by Lucius Cornelius Sulla. It was his aunt who planned Caesar's future and helped make him a priest of Jupiter.

When he was around 17 years old, Caesar married a patrician woman named Cornelia. Sulla, the dictator of Rome, ordered Caesar to divorce his wife and marry someone else. Caesar refused and went into hiding into the Italian hills.

After Sulla died in 78BCE, Caesar became a lawyer. In order to improve his speaking, he was taught at some of the best schools. On his way to one of these schools, he was captured by pirates and held for a ransom of 12,000 gold pieces. He told the pirates to demand more because he thought he was worth it. Caesar also warned the pirates that he would return to find them. After he was released, he raised his own fleet, found the pirates, and killed them all.

Caesar started borrowing a lot of money and started living a public life. In 68BCE, his Aunt Julia died. At her funeral, Caesar announced that he had traced his family line all the way back to Romulus, the founder of Rome. The Roman crowds loved him for the story.

In 65BCE, Caesar was elected to direct public works and games. In 62BCE, he became *praetor*, or judicial magistrate. When his term was over, he was named governor of a province in Spain. Caesar got into the military and became a great general. He led his troops brilliantly and expanded the boundaries of his Spanish province. He returned to Rome, where he planned to become a powerful figure in government.

In 60BCE, Caesar joined with two other men to form the First Triumvirate, an alliance that was to rule Rome. The other two men were Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus. Pompey was an important general and Crassus was the richest man in Rome.

In 58BCE, Caesar led a military campaign to expand the boundaries of Gaul. His brilliant military strategies, combined with the speed and discipline of his troops let him win battle after battle. Caesar was responsible for expanding the Roman Empire further into Gaul, parts of Germany, and even Britain! When stories of his victories reached Rome, the people sang praises to Julius Caesar.

Despite his popularity, many rich and powerful people were jealous of Caesar. His ally Crassus had been killed, and Pompey had now turned against him. Many rich and powerful people were looking to stop Caesar.

Caesar responded to this threat by marching his army into Rome. This started a civil war in Rome that Caesar's army won in 2 months. In 48BCE, Caesar named himself dictator of Rome for life.

Many of the senators thought Caesar was a dangerous man who wanted to be king of all of Rome. The Romans did not believe in kings. A plot soon developed against him, and on March 15, 44BCE, a band of patricians, led by Caesar's friend Brutus, stabbed Caesar to death during a Senate meeting. He died at the base of Pompey's statue.

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using POQ (complete sentences!)

1. Why would Caesar tracing his family to Romulus and Remus be important?

2. Caesar was first named governor of a province in what country?

3. What happened to each of the three people in the First Triumvirate?

4. What territories did Caesar expand the Roman Empire into (there should be 4 territories)?

5. Why did the senators want to kill Caesar?